

Florida_Sappenfield

Maternal and Child Health

The Division of Family Health consists of 5 Bureaus and the Office of Surveillance, Evaluation and Epidemiology (SEE), all focused on improving the health of Floridians through 1) informing, educating and empowering people about health issues, 2) developing and improving coordinated, integrated and accountable health systems, and 3) planning and implementing evidence-based programs and policies. The Division has 200 employees and includes maternal and child health, women's health, school health, family planning, abstinence, primary care, WIC food supplemental program, child care food program, and chronic disease prevention/health promotion. The Division is part of Florida Department of Health (FDOH), an organization with 16,000 employees working at the state, regions or 67 county health departments serving approximately 17 million state residents.

The purpose of Office of Surveillance, Evaluation and Epidemiology (SEE) is to strengthen the Department's ability to effectively use scientific evidence in its planning and decision-making related to MCH policies and programs. Created in 2006 with hiring a State MCH Epidemiologist, the Office focuses on surveillance, evaluation and epidemiology including training the public health workforce. Surveillance activities include investigating increasing rates of fetal and infant mortality, prematurity, smoking during pregnancy, and lack of funding for prenatal care among immigrants. Policy and program evaluation activities include revising the Healthy Start Prenatal Screen that is offered to all pregnant women statewide, and developing plans to evaluate Healthy Start services provided to high risk women. And, epidemiology activities include studying the state's high rate of pregnancy-related mortality especially among black women, high rates of childhood obesity and limited access to preventive dental care by children.

The CSTE fellow will be actively engaged in planned projects and activities with the SEE Team and other partners on a daily basis. With input, SEE continuously develops a list of potential MCH epidemiology and surveillance projects of policy/program relevance for staff, fellows and students to work on. The fellow can consider these proposals and new ones. The fellow will develop a work plan designed to meet the fellowship requirements, fellow's interests and program needs in consultation with the CSTE mentors and the Division Director. The intent is to provide a well-rounded solid MCH epidemiologist experience.

Potential Analytic Projects:

1. Investigate Florida's black/white disparity in pregnancy-related mortality: In 1996, FDOH initiated Pregnancy Associated Mortality Review (PAMR). From PAMR we have learned that black women are 4 to 6 times as likely to die of a pregnancy-related factor as white women. This project would quantitatively and qualitatively explore reasons for the disparity.
2. Study Florida's black/white disparity in pregnancy-related morbidity: Using a birth certificate file linked to hospital discharges, explore the racial disparities in maternal

morbidities especially those conditions that contribute to pregnancy-related mortality and its racial disparity.

3. Study the impact of Florida's increase in overweight/obese pregnant women on risk factors and outcomes: Florida has experienced a large increase in overweight/obesity among women prior to pregnancy. Explore the impact of this change on perinatal risk factors and outcomes.

4. Study Florida's increase in alcohol use during pregnancy: Between 2000 and 2003, Florida experienced a significant increase in the proportion of women who drink alcohol during the last trimester. Investigate among which women the increase is occurring and potential areas to focus prevention.

Potential Evaluation Projects:

1. Study Florida's increase in breastfeeding rate and the impact of WIC breastfeeding promotion: Florida breastfeeding rates have increased over the last 5 years, the same time period that WIC launched major statewide initiatives to promote breast feeding. This study will focus on preventive/risk factors related to the increase in breastfeeding and the relationship to WIC participation.

2. Study Medicaid women not enrolled in WIC prenatally: All pregnant women on Medicaid are eligible to participate prenatally in WIC Food Supplemental Program, but only 70% participate regardless of risk. Investigate the Medicaid women who do and do not participate in WIC. The intent is to use to improve outreach.

Potential Surveillance Projects:

In 2004, Florida implemented a new birth certificate, and in 2005, also implemented the new death certificate.

1 Study the impact of changing month of entry into prenatal care: The new birth certificate question on entry into prenatal care impacted measures of month of prenatal care entry. Compared to other states that have adopted the new birth certificate, more are reported as unknown in Florida.

2. Study the changes in sleep-related causes of infant death: National studies have reported changes in SIDS reporting as a cause of death compared to other related causes. Estimate the trends in Florida reporting, especially by population subgroups, and determine the potential for further reduction in safe sleep related causes.

Because of multiple hurricanes, pan flu concerns, and other potential hazards, the FDOH persistently focuses on preparedness. The fellow will be able to receive training, to volunteer with hurricane preparation and response, to participate in pan flu planning, and more. Florida experiences several outbreaks each month, providing the fellow with a variety of opportunities for participating outbreaks, based on their interest over the two year fellowship.

Assignment Location: Tallahassee, Florida

Primary Mentor: William M. Sappenfield, M.D., M.P.H.
State MCH Epidemiologist

Advanced Degrees: M.D., Louisiana State University (1980)
M.P.H., Epidemiology, Harvard (1984)

Secondary Mentor: David Goodman, PhD, MS
MCH Epidemiologist

Advanced Degrees: PhD, Johns Hopkins University (2005)
MS, University of Georgia (1996)